

604. **Philosophy** of interest in reproduction. Incest. Some reserve In regard to the interpretation of myths is proper and necessary, but the absorbing interest of sex production for man, after he begins to depend upon it and cooperate with it for his food supply, is a product of the study of myths which may be accepted with confidence. That interest was no more sensual than interest in the rainfall, and the mythologizing about it was no more depraved than mythologizing about creation or language. Men were sure to apply all which they learned about reproduction in food plants and animals to their own reproduction. If Chaldean civilization goes back five or six thousand years before Christ, then the Chaldeans had had ample time, even before Hammurabi, to experience the evils of overpopulation and of sex vice. In the Chaldean mythology Ishtar, goddess of all sex attraction and repulsion, destroyed all the lovers whom she selected. She had the double character, which appears in all myths and philosophy, of sex license and sex renunciation together. She was a goddess of the mother family and polyandric.¹ The two policies, sex license and sex renunciation, were both advocated at the same time in the early centuries of the Christian era and in the Middle Ages. Men found out that the problem of reproduction for them was far more complicated than the multiplication of dates to the utmost limit. At this point of knowledge instinctive or intelligent regulations had to be put on physical appetites. For primitive men the reproductive function is as simple a function as eating or sleeping. It is not in itself wicked or base. It is naive until knowledge comes. Then it is found that rules must be made to

regulate the interest.
If there are rules, there is the sense of
wrongdoing in the
breach of them. A thing which is tabooed becomes
interesting
and more or less awful. The numbers of the sexes
are never
exactly equal, and the proportion is further
disturbed by polyg-
amy. Therefore experience of evil and
inconvenience forced
some reflection and some judgments as to life
policy. Regula-
tions were devised behind which there was a
philosophy of the
satisfaction of interests; that is to say, mores
were developed

¹ Tiele-Gehrich, *JRelig. in Alterthume*, I, 169.